

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, DC 20594**

**HUMAN PERFORMANCE  
GROUP CHAIRMAN'S FACTUAL REPORT**

Revised May 23, 2004

**Accident No.** DCA03MM035  
**Vessels Involved:** US Small Passenger Vessel *Taki-Tooo*, O.N. 579874,  
LOA 35.8 feet, USCG Registered Length 32.5 feet,  
Gross Tons 14, Fiberglass, Built in 1977, Inspected.  
**Accident Type:** Capsizing  
**Location:** Pacific Ocean near Entrance to Tillamook Bay,  
Oregon  
**Date:** June 14, 2003  
**Time:** 0715 local<sup>1</sup>  
**Owner:** Davis Fisheries, Inc. Garibaldi, Oregon  
**Operator** Garibaldi Charters  
**Property Damage:** \$ 60,000; Constructive Total Loss  
**Injuries:** 11 deaths (Captain and 10 passengers)  
**Compliment:** 2 Crewmembers and 17 passengers

**B. HUMAN PERFORMANCE/OPERATIONS GROUP**

Bill Woody, NTSB, Human Performance Group Chairman  
Deputy Sheriff Peter Wood, Oregon Marine Board  
Mr. Kenneth M. Lawrenson, Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinator,  
Portland, Oregon  
LT Felton Gilmore, USCG, Senior Investigating Officer, Portland, Oregon

**C. SUMMARY**

On June 14, 2003, about 0715 the US Small Passenger Vessel *Taki-Tooo*, while proceeding out of Tillamook Bay encountered two large waves just beyond the entrance jetties and capsized. The *Taki-Tooo* was manned by a licensed master and one deckhand and was carrying 17 passengers for a one-day, ocean fishing trip.

Before the *Taki-Tooo* departed the boat harbor in Garibaldi, the captain provided a safety briefing to the passengers about the location and donning of

---

<sup>1</sup> All times are Pacific Daylight Savings Time as read on a 24-hour clock, unless specifically noted.

1 lifejackets and other safety equipment. During the briefing, the captain informed  
2 the passengers that the vessel would not carry any crab pots because of the  
3 large swells at the bar and expected sea conditions, and that the passengers  
4 would be required to sit while crossing the bar due to the heavy swells.  
5 According to the deckhand, the captain had earlier discussed the issue with her  
6 about not bringing crab pots because of the conditions at the bar and that the  
7 conditions outside might be “bumpy.” About 0600, the *Taki-Too* departed the  
8 boat harbor. The trip from the boat harbor along the channel through Tillamook  
9 Bay was uneventful.

10  
11 Because of large breaking waves at the entrance of Tillamook Bay, the  
12 Coast Guard had imposed restrictions on recreational vessels that prevented  
13 them and uninspected small passenger vessels carrying up to six passengers  
14 from leaving the Bay<sup>2</sup>. As the *Taki-Too* approached the jetties leading out of  
15 Tillamook Bay, there were three other small passenger (charter fishing) vessels  
16 waiting inside the jetties for the waves to subside. At the time it was near the end  
17 of the ebb tide and it was expected that the sea conditions would improve after  
18 the tide stopped ebbing.

19  
20 About 0700 the charter fishing vessel *Norwester* proceeded outbound on a  
21 north northwesterly course across the bar<sup>3</sup> after clearing the jetties. A short time  
22 later the *Oakland Pilot* proceeded outbound, also on a north northwesterly  
23 course. A few minutes later, the D&D, a similar size vessel to the *Taki-Too*,  
24 proceeded outbound, also following a north northwesterly course. At the time,  
25 the *Amanda*, a 23-foot commercial fishing vessel, was also waiting to proceed  
26 outbound.

27  

---

<sup>2</sup> Thirteenth Coast Guard District Standard Operating Procedures of April 19, 2002, sets up procedures for restricting recreation vessels and uninspected passenger vessels carrying up to six passengers from going to sea when bar or sea conditions are hazardous.

<sup>3</sup> A sand bar lies across the entrance to Tillamook Bay which causes the incoming ocean swells to crest and break as the water depth decreases, preventing vessels from proceeding due west during large swells. The masters interviewed cited that depths across the middle ground, the bar lying west of the jetties, were too shallow for safe passage unless the sea was very calm.

1 About 0715, the Captain of the *Taki-Tooo*, after observing the incoming  
2 waves, elected to proceed out across the bar, apparently intending to follow a  
3 northwesterly course; however, his turn to the right started at point closer to the  
4 tip of the north jetty than the preceding three charter fishing vessels. The  
5 deckhand later stated that the *Taki-Tooo* encountered two very large waves. She  
6 estimated the first large wave as about 9 to 10 feet high and the second large  
7 wave as 12 to 15 feet high. According to the deckhand, the Captain put the  
8 propeller in reverse<sup>4</sup>, while meeting the first of the two large waves. The  
9 deckhand stated that as the vessel came down the back side of the first large  
10 wave the vessel turned to the right to a northerly heading which placed it  
11 broadside to the oncoming second large wave. According to the deckhand, the  
12 second large wave broke before reaching the vessel, then struck the vessel on  
13 the port side capsizing the vessel. By the time the vessel capsized it had passed  
14 to the north of the north jetty.

15  
16 The operator of the *Amanda* stated that he was watching the waves for an  
17 opportunity to go out and stated he saw the same opening or lull in the waves  
18 that he believed the captain of the *Taki-Tooo* saw and it appeared to him that it  
19 was a reasonable time for the *Taki-Tooo* to proceed out. The operator said that  
20 within about six seconds of the *Taki-Tooo* captain applying power to go out, two  
21 very large waves appeared. He stated that the *Taki-Tooo* went over two large  
22 swells before encountering the first of the two very large waves. The operator  
23 stated that the primary swells were from the west, and that there were also some  
24 swells from the southwest and occasionally some swells from the northwest.

25  
26 Other charter vessel operators stated that the waves or swells come in  
27 sets and that the operator watches the waves to ascertain the number of waves  
28 in a set and the length of time, or lull, between sets.

29  

---

<sup>4</sup> Other operators stated that an operator heading toward a large wave might "throttle back" i.e. reduce engine speed, but none acknowledged having reversed the propeller.

1 The deckhand who was on the flying bridge with the captain survived.  
2 One passenger on the after deck, who was a good swimmer, survived and one  
3 passenger on the after deck was washed into the cabin during the capsizing,  
4 raising the number of passengers in the cabin to seven. Of the seven passengers  
5 trapped in the cabin, 6 managed to acquire life jackets, and exit the inverted  
6 cabin through windows and the cabin door and survive, although one survivor  
7 lost his life jacket after exiting the vessel. The captain and 10 of the passengers,  
8 including one passenger inside the cabin, perished for a total of 11 lives lost.  
9

#### 10 **D. CREW INFORMATION**

11

12 Captain--The captain (Douglas R. Davis, DOB 05/22/1937) had over 15  
13 years experience operating the *Taki-Tooo* in and out of Tillamook Bay, before  
14 selling his charter business in 2001. He had continued to operate the *Taki-Tooo*  
15 on a part time basis after the sale for the next two years, gradually operating the  
16 boat less and less as the new owner of Garibaldi Charters took on more of the  
17 operations. The new owner stated that the captain had operated the *Taki-Tooo*  
18 about three prior times in 2003 to get acquainted with some new electronics  
19 equipment and on one occasion the new owner had been on board. The  
20 captain's wife recalled that he had operated the boat about two or three times  
21 this season. Three other operators stated that the captain had crossed the bar  
22 more than a thousand times and that he was regarded as a very capable vessel  
23 operator. His license file indicates that he had some 1600 days operating the  
24 *Taki-Tooo* up to the time of his application for his current license in February  
25 1999.  
26

27 The captain's wife stated that he was in good health and feeling fine. She  
28 said that he was looking forward to taking the boat out that day.  
29

1 She said that he had received treatment for prostate cancer and a cancer  
2 on his tongue and had recovered fully. She said that he wore glasses for  
3 reading, but otherwise had good vision.

4  
5 The deckhand stated that the captain appeared to be his normal self and  
6 as usual was in a good mood and was joking with everyone.

7  
8 At the time of the accident the captain held a license as Master, Near  
9 Coastal for Steam or Motor Vessels of Not More than 100 Tons, issued on March  
10 3, 1999. He had been licensed to operate small passenger vessels like the *Taki-*  
11 *Tooo* since 1984.

12  
13 Deckhand--The deckhand, Tamara Buell, a recent college graduate,  
14 stated that this was her fifth year as a deckhand. Her experience as a deckhand  
15 occurred during the summer months when she was not in school. During her first  
16 summer she had worked on the *Taki-Tooo* under the captain for about half of that  
17 summer and then spent about three years on the *Norwester* operated by her  
18 brother (Tron Buell). During the 2003 season, most of her experience had been  
19 serving as deckhand on the *Taki-Tooo* under her father, the owner of the  
20 company, who normally operated the *Taki-Tooo*. This was her first trip this year  
21 with the captain. She stated that she intended to acquire a license and become  
22 the captain of a charter fishing boat.

## 23 24 **E. Operations**

25  
26 The captain (Douglas R. Davis, and his wife (Sharon Davis) had operated  
27 Garibaldi Charters, a charter fishing company in Garibaldi for 15 years. They  
28 owned and operated two small passenger vessels, the *Taki-Tooo* and the *D&D*,  
29 which were outfitted for charter fishing parties. The captain normally operated  
30 the *Taki-Tooo* and he regarded it as his boat. Their business like other charter  
31 fishing companies in Garibaldi involved one-day trips, normally from early

1 morning to around noon depending upon fishing conditions. During salmon and  
2 halibut seasons fishing trips often extended into the late afternoon.

3  
4 The season normally started in mid March and ran through the middle of  
5 September each year, approximately 183 days per year, less an estimated 20  
6 days per year due to weather and sea conditions. The captain's wife stated that  
7 conditions at the bar were getting worse each year. Estimates from others  
8 indicate that weather and bar conditions resulted in cancellations of  
9 approximately 10% of trips. Also, that the captain of each vessel was free to  
10 decide whether or not to cross the bar. The present owner of Garibaldi Charters  
11 stated that it was not uncommon to refund the payment to passengers when the  
12 captain had decided not to go out due to the bad sea or weather conditions. The  
13 captain normally received about one third of the ticket sales; however, when a  
14 trip was cancelled all payments were returned to the passengers and the captain,  
15 who was a contractor, received no compensation.

16  
17 In 2001, the captain and his wife sold Garibaldi Charters to the Buell  
18 family (Mitchell and Linda Buell). A provision of the sale was that the Davis  
19 family would retain ownership of the *Taki-Tooo* and D&D and charter the two  
20 vessels to Garibaldi Charters under a lease-purchase agreement. The captain  
21 also agreed to operate the TAKI-TOOO for the first year and then operate the  
22 vessel on a part time basis. During the second year, according to the captain's  
23 wife, the captain operated the *Taki-Tooo* about half of the time. The captain's  
24 wife and the new owner stated that groups that had sailed with the captain often  
25 requested him, and about a week before the accident a group of railroad  
26 employees had requested that the captain run the boat. According to the  
27 captain's wife, this particular group of railroad employees had been loyal  
28 customers for about ten years and they liked the captain for being able to find  
29 good fishing and as someone who contributed to having a good time.

1 According to the captain's wife, the captain was pleased that he had been  
2 requested and was looking forward to operating the *Taki-Too*. She said that the  
3 captain obtained information on the expected weather and sea conditions from  
4 the Internet the evening prior to the trip, and that this was his normal procedure.  
5 She said that they went to bed at 2100 as was their custom and that the captain  
6 arose at 0430, his usual time. She stated that his morning routine was to have  
7 coffee and make a lunch to take with him, and listened to the weather report.  
8 She said that he had a marine radio in his truck and normally listened to the  
9 weather while en route to the boat. She estimated he departed home  
10 approximately 0530, and according to others arrived at the Garibaldi Charters  
11 office about 0530.

## 12 13 **F. MEDICAL**

14  
15 The captain had passed his physical examination for his current license on  
16 February 2, 1999. His license application cited surgery and radiation for  
17 prostate cancer in 1996 and radiation for a cancer on his tongue in 1989, and  
18 that he was taking some medications. Information regarding the captain's pre-  
19 accident medical condition and conditions found on autopsy is included in a  
20 separate report "Medical Records information" in the public docket.

## 21 22 **J. TOXICOLOGY**

23  
24 Toxicology analysis was conducted by the Oregon Health & Science  
25 University (OHSU) Medical Examiner in Portland, Oregon. The OHSU laboratory  
26 performed its normal urine analysis for major drugs of abuse, prescriptions, and  
27 over-the-counter medications, and the results were negative. The analysis  
28 detected no ethanol in the captain's blood specimens.

29  
30 The Federal Aviation Administration's Civil Aerospace Medical Institute  
31 (CAMI) also examined specimens from the autopsy. Test for alcohol in the

1 vitreous revealed no alcohol. Testing for drugs<sup>5</sup> revealed no evidence of illegal  
2 drugs. The following legal drugs were detected:

- 3  
4 (1) 0.063 (ug/ml, ug/g) AMITRIPTYLINE detected in Blood  
5 (2) AMITRIPTYLINE present in Urine  
6 (3) 0.042(ug/ml, ug/g) NORTRIPTYLINE detected in Blood  
7 (4) NORTRIPTYLINE present in Urine  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16

17 W. R. Woody  
18 Human Performance Investigator  
19  
20 .

---

<sup>5</sup> DRUGS: Immunoassay and chromatography are used to screen for legal and illegal drugs, which include: amphetamine (0.010), opiates (0.010), marihuana (0.001), cocaine (0.020), phencyclidine (0.002), benzodiazepines (0.030), barbiturates (0.060), antidepressants (0.100), antihistamines (0.020), meprobamate (0.100), methaqualone (0.100), and nicotine (0.050). The values in parentheses are the threshold values in ug/mL used to report positive results. Values below this concentration are normally reported as not detected. GC/Mass Spec, HPLC/Mass Spec, or GC/FTIR, is used to confirm most positive results.